

THE DAY, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2003

MILITARY BRIEFS

Simmons pushes bill that would reimburse troops for R&R airfare

Washington — U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, has sponsored a bill to provide reimbursement for airfare costs incurred by members of the armed forces for domestic travel while on leave from deployment in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

"There is no question, for those who sacrifice so much for our country, the federal government can and should cover the costs of airfare so our service men and women can return to their families for some well-deserved rest and recuperation," Simmons said.

While troops serving in Iraq for more than one year are entitled to 15 days of paid-leave in the United States, the Department of Defense will only transport military personnel as far as Baltimore, Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth or Los Angeles.

Military personnel are responsible for the commercial airfare required to travel beyond those destinations. The bill would cover the cost of domestic flights from one of the hubs to the service member's home.